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061829Z May 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002651

SIPDIS

BAGHDAD PLEASE PASS TO MNF-I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/06/2015

TAGS: MOPS MASS PREL TU IZ

SUBJECT: ACTION REQUEST: AIRLIFT FOR WOUNDED IRAQI KURDS

REF: ANKARA 2578

Classified By: A/DCM James R. Moore for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is an action request. Please see para 5.

12. (C) Late May 6, MFA Iraq Department Head Avni Botsali informed Polmiloff that KDP leader Massoud Barzani had requested that Turkey medivac 27 of the injured from the Erbil bombing and 10 of their family members for advanced medical care in Turkey. (The GOT had offered such care in its message of condolences for the bombings, reftel.) Botsali said that MFA was trying to charter an aircraft or, failing that, would request the Turkish military provide an aircraft. If there were no other alternatives, Turkey might turn to the US for airlift support. They hoped to be able to fly the patients out of Erbil on May 7. Subsequently, Botsali informed Polmiloff that MFA U/S Tuygan thought it would be better if the US provided the airlift.

13. (C) Polmilcouns contacted MFA MidEast DDG Safak Gokturk and advised that, as we had learned in previous cases, it was unlikely that the US could make a decision on airlift for these patients and the necessary logistical arrangements in time to move them May 7. If Turkey had the means, then the Embassy would do all it could to facilitate the necessary clearances. Moreover, a 100 pct Turkish operation would likely have a more positive impact on Turkey-KDP relations.

14. (C) After consulting within MFA, Gokturk informed Polmilcouns that KDP foreign relations head Safeen Dizayee had insisted that the patients be moved May 7, if not by air, then over land. Gokturk said Turkey would provide the airlift. They had not yet made final arrangements, so MFA did not have the information necessary to file a formal diplomatic clearance request. Polmilcouns advised that a formal request should be filed with Iraqi MFA as soon as the information was known, and suggested that the Turkish LNO to CENTCOM should work the details with the staff there. Gokturk said MFA would also contact us. Polmiloff followed up with Botsali to reiterate that the Turkish request should be submitted as soon as possible.

15. (C) Action request: We request Embassy Baghdad's and CENTCOM's assistance in facilitating the clearance request for this humanitarian mission once it is delivered to the ITG and CENTCOM staff in Tampa.

16. (U) Iraq posts minimize considered.

EDELMAN